

# **NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)**

\*\*\*Proposed Site\*\*\*

September 2008

## BARITE HILL/NEVADA GOLDFIELDS | McCormick, South Carolina

McCormick County

#### **Site Location:**

Barite Hill/Nevada Goldfields (Barite Hill) is located about 2.5 miles southwest of the town of McCormick on the northern side of secondary Highway S-33-30 and about 0.75 mile northwest of the intersection of Highways S-33-44 and S-33-30.

### △ Site History:

Barite Hill was previously owned by Nevada Goldfields Inc. who operated a mine on the property. Mining operations began in 1989 and Barite Hill actively mined gold and silver until 1992 and gold until October 1994. The Barite Hill property covers about 795.2 acres. Mining operations encompassed 135.5 acres, and the remaining 659.7 acres served as a buffer zone of areas not to be disturbed beyond their natural state. Two mine pits are located at Barite Hill: the 20-acre Main Pit that still contains low pH water and the 3.93-acre reclaimed Rainsford Pit. During mining operations, Barite Hill also included a process plant; a reusable heap leach facility consisting of an asphalt-lined leach pad; a permanent leach pad; eight ponds; and two waste disposal areas. In June 1999, Nevada Goldfields Inc. filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, and in July of the same year Nevada Goldfields, Inc. abandoned the property and the keys were given to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

#### **Site Contamination/Contaminants:**

Source No. 1 is comprised of 7 ponds containing about 2,286,142 cubic feet of liquid and sediment. Both the ponds and sediment contain arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, selenium, silver, zinc, and cyanide. Source No. 2 is the Main Pit and contains about 89,000,000 gallons of low pH water. Surface water and/or sediment samples collected from Source No. 2 contained arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, nickel, lead, mercury, selenium, silver, and zinc. Source No. 3 is an area of contaminated soil located in the 22-acre mineralized zone which contains arsenic, copper, lead, silver, and cyanide.

## **## Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:**

There are elevated levels of metals in surface water and sediments of Hawe Creek and it's tributaries. Because Hawe Creek is a fishery, people may be exposed by eating contaminated fish. In addition, Hawe Creek empties into a drinking water reservoir. There is also a risk that the Main Pit will over bank and acid/metals laden water will enter the reservoir.

## Response Activities (to date):

In October 2007, the EPA Emergency Response and Removal Branch began removal activities at Barite Hill. These activities are currently on-going.

### Need for NPL Listing:

The State of South Carolina referred the site to EPA because of the lack of funding for cleanup and low pH water in the Main Pit, which presents a threat to the Savannah River in the event of a major catastrophic incident. Other cleanup alternatives were evaluated, but are not viable at this time because Barite Hill is no longer a viable company and the state does not have the resources to cleanup the Barite Hill Site. EPA received a letter of support from the State for placing this site on the NPL.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination.]

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at <a href="http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html">http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html</a> or by telephone at 1-888-422-8737.